

FLIGHT JACKET

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Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

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Cpl. William A. Hochrime, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, hugs his wife Danielle April 13 for the first time after a seven month deployment to Al Asad, Iraq. Photo by Lance Cpl. George J. Papastrat

3rd MAW Marines, sailors return home

Story by Lance Cpl. Robert W. Beaver
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

More than 450 Marines and sailors from 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing returned recently from deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd MAW, returned home April 13 and Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369, MAG-39, 3rd MAW, returned April 16, both from a seven month deployment to the Al Anbar Province of Iraq.

HMH-466, also known as "Wolfpack," provided support for several major operations including Operations River Gate and Steel Curtain.

"We did a lot of troop insertion and pre-staging before combat operations," said Capt. Matt W. Quigley, CH-53E pilot, HMH-466.

The squadron also provided transportation for various VIP missions, Iraqi police recruits and the Iraqi elections, according to Quigley, a 27-year-old native of Harleysville, Pa.

On Feb. 18, "Wolfpack" set a squadron record when they surpassed 60,000 "Class-A" mishap-free flight hours. The squadron has never had a "Class A" mishap during its 22-year history.

Every Marine and sailor returned home safely to their loved ones. The squadron suffered no casualties through-

out the deployment.

HMLA-369 flew many hours in support of many operations in the area of Ramadi and Fallujah.

"We provided close air support and escort for ground forces," said Maj. T. P. Rampey, assistant operations officer, HMLA-369 and a Columbia, S. C., native. "We nearly doubled our flight hours in half the amount of time."

The squadron has participated in Operations Steel Curtain and Iron Fist.

The Marines and sailors were happy to be back and away from the stresses of deployment.

"I feel relieved to be home," said Lance Cpl. W. O. Hammons, avionics technician, HMH-466.



Maj. Gen. Samuel T. Helland
Commanding General
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing



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Commanding Officer
MCAS Miramar

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Public Affairs Director

Capt. Al Eskalis
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Reservists' healthcare bridge

By Mark Jecker

TriWest Healthcare Alliance

For many National Guard and Reserve service members leaving active duty, TRICARE offers a health care bridge to civilian life.

Reserve Component members and their families may be covered for 180 days of TRICARE health care benefits under the Transitional Assistance Management Program, called TAMP.

TAMP coverage begins on the separation date and provides TRICARE Standard, TRICARE Extra or TRICARE Prime health care coverage.

To qualify for TAMP benefits, Reserve Component members must be:

- Involuntarily separating from active duty under honorable conditions;
- Separating from an active duty period of more than 30 days in support of a contingency operation;
- Separating from active duty following involuntary retention (Stop-Loss) in support of a contingency operation; or
- Separating from active duty following a voluntary agreement to stay on active duty for less than one year in support of a contingency operation.

Each service branch determines eligibility for these transitional benefits. If separating from active duty, contact the nearest service personnel office to verify eligibility.

Those living in TRICARE Prime service areas may choose the

Prime option. Enrollments received by the 20th of the month will be effective at the start of the following month. Remember that an initial enrollment may not be retroactive to the service separation date.

To maintain existing TRICARE Prime coverage, complete and submit a new Prime enrollment form before separation. There is no cost for enrollment during this period. The benefit remains the same as for active duty family members with minimal out of pocket costs.

Those living outside Prime service areas may use TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra during the TAMP period and are only responsible for co-payments – 20 percent for TRICARE Standard and 15 percent for TRICARE Extra.

Details of all three options are provided at www.triwest.com and www.tricare.osd.mil.

Former active duty and Reserve Component members eligible for transitional benefits may receive dental care at military dental treatment facilities on a space-available basis. Family members are not eligible for dental care at these facilities.

Civilian dental care is not covered for sponsors or family members under TAMP, but certain Reserve Component members and their families may receive dental care by enrolling in the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP). Contact the TDP administrator, United Concordia Companies Inc. at (800) 866-8499 or at www.ucci.com for more information.

TriWest helps troops with combat stress

By Tara Mogan

TriWest Healthcare Alliance

PHOENIX — To ensure that America's troops who are suffering from combat stress get the help they need, TriWest Healthcare Alliance, the Department of Defense contractor administering the TRICARE program in the west region, has produced a post-deployment support DVD featuring advice, information and encouragement from behavioral health experts.

"With some reports of nearly one-third of our returning service members exhibiting mental health or combat stress-related symptoms, we produced this DVD to help them and their families seek treatment early in an effort to help prevent some of the long-term consequences of combat stress or even PTSD," said David J. McIntyre, Jr., president and CEO of TriWest. "Combat stress can devastate families, relationships and careers while leaving those who suffer from it feeling helpless and even suicidal. The video helps them understand the nature of combat stress and overcome the stigma of seeking treatment."

TriWest received requests for 80,000 of the "Getting Home: All the Way Home," DVDs in the first 30 days they were available.

"This DVD has successfully de-mystified many of the concerns associated with the behavioral health matters of a soldier's post-deployment," said Karen Meadows-McGraw, the family support coordinator for a battalion of the California National Guard. "The DVD provides an opportunity to take a quiet time to listen and absorb some very vital information. Most importantly, it allows the viewer the privacy that is so important due to the nature of the topic, especially if the listener is currently experiencing some of the symptoms discussed."

The 38-minute "Getting Home" DVD features behavioral health experts detailing various aspects of combat stress and describes symptoms those suffering from combat stress may exhibit, such as anger, detachment, sleeplessness and night sweats.

"Getting Home" also stresses the importance of getting help early and provides resources and information about treatment

options available through TRICARE, the military's health care program, which is ranked as the nation's number-one health program in customer satisfaction.

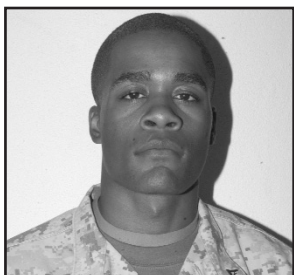
It is distributed by TriWest to demobilized service men and women in the TRICARE West Region as they return to their families, friends and former lives.

"I was impressed with the DVD. This is the best one I've seen yet on the subject," said Ronald Emerich, family programs professional, Nevada National Guard. "The soldiers' stories are outstanding. The guys coming back are having a hard time coping, and it will really help them to hear these stories and say to themselves maybe I do have a problem. I'd like to put one in every soldier's demobilization packet."

TriWest has also established a toll-free behavioral health hotline at 866-284-3743 offering service members and their families assistance 24-hours a day. In addition, TriWest has launched an extensive behavioral health portal at www.triwest.com. "Getting Home" DVDs can be ordered through the Web site.

Miramarks

How can Marines help other Marines who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder?



LCpl. Tracee A. Emory
Wireman
MWCS-38

"Marines can help the other Marines by sitting down and talking about their problems."



Capt. Derek M. Abbey
Assistant Logistics Officer
VMFA(AW)-242

"Marines can have an open ear and make sure the other Marine is aware of the help that is available."

3rd MAW names ‘2005 Marine of the Year’

Story by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

A Marine Corps Air Station Yuma based Marine received the award for Marine of the Year for 2005 April 3, for the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing at the wing’s headquarters building.

Cpl. Jesse G. Hansen, radar repairman, Marine Air Control Squadron 1, Marine Air Control Group 38, 3rd MAW, was presented with the award during a morning colors ceremony for his outstanding performance during 2005.

“He is an outstanding performer,” said Staff Sgt. John T. Basserman, radar chief, MACS-1. “His level of maturity and attention to detail goes way beyond his peers.”

Hansen always takes it upon himself to go beyond his duties and keep his Marines active.

“I’m always trying to find things to do,” said Hansen. “Whether it is off-duty education for me or training my Marines, I just like to stay active.”

During the ceremony, Hansen was presented with different types of awards and gift certificates. His most prized award was a coin from Maj. Gen. Samuel T. Helland, commanding general, 3rd MAW.

“He always takes his job seriously and never quits,” said Lance Cpl. Gwendalin L. Rhodes, radar repairman, MACS-1. “He is an NCO we look up to.”

Hansen is a Marine who has proven himself time and time again. He won Marine of the Quarter boards at MACG-38 and 1st Marine Expeditionary Force. He later received a certificate of commendation and the Navy Achievement Medal in June 2005.

When he attended Corporals Course, he was given the Warrior Award and took the Honor Graduate Award, receiving another certificate of accommodation.

“Not only does he perform his tasks at hand, but he always looks to achieve more as long as it benefits the ones he works with,” said Basserman, a Stanton, Va., native.

“He is an influential role model who leads by example,” said Rhodes, a Cushing, Okla., native.

Hansen served in Iraq from January to June of 2005 as part of the security unit under 4th Low-Altitude Air Defense Battalion. There he endured constant rocket and motor attacks but remained motivated and willing to do his job.

“I’m proud to have done my small part in serving for freedom in Iraq. Although I’ve never had a chance to test my mettle in a fire fight, I’m proud that I’ve listened to my conscience and served in this fine Marine Corps,” said Hansen.

“I honestly feel that serving my country gives me a say in what this country does and how it does it,” concluded Hansen. “I’m proud to work for outstanding leaders who I can look up to and respect. I love the Corps and what it stands for.”



Cpl. Jesse G. Hansen, radar repairman, Marine Air Control Squadron 1, Marine Air Control Group 38, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, is handed several awards and certificates April 3 for winning the 3rd MAW 2005 Marine of the Year Award. Hansen was given certificates which include two free nights at a hotel and a \$175 to a restaurant. Photo by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin

Expo gives sneak peek of new technology

Story by Lance Cpl. George J. Papastrat
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar hosted a technology expo April 13 at the Officers’ Club.

More than 25 exhibitors demonstrated the latest in electrical solutions, Information Technology products, software, as well as many more new products.

Col. Warren A. Fox, operations officer for MCAS Miramar, said “this is his first technology expo.”

“It provides information on new technology,” said Fox. “You have to make sure what you buy is what you want. You have to make sure the new technologies are compatible with older technologies already implemented in your job.”

“It’s a way to find out what’s new,” said Lt. Col. Jennifer B. Butler, executive officer, Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. “It’s important to see what new technologies are in the market today.”

Capt. Fernando Blackburn, the safety officer with Marine Air Control Group 38, said “for what we do here, it’s perfect.”

This was the first technology expo Blackburn has attended while at Miramar.

“I was hoping to see more tactical gear, but it hits the target audience,” said Blackburn.

Most service members are busy with their job, and don’t have the time to see what new civilian technology is available to them. This is a good way to show them.

Rick Gow, National Federal Sales manager for SciptLogic, was one of the many civilian enterprises present at the technology expo. NFS provides desktop and server management for the air station as well as



Lt. Col. Jennifer B. Butler (right), executive officer, Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, and a Troy, Ala., native, observes a demonstration from an expo vendor with an interactive touch screen which is a new tool for slide show programs. The touch screen brings attention and participation to a presentation. Photo by Lance Cpl. George J. Papastrat

many other military installations. Iraq.
The products this company had on display are “It is amazing to see technology advance from when I first joined the Corps,” said Fox.
deployable and are designed to enhance operations in

Miramar paramedic saves woman’s life

Story by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

A firefighter team with the Miramar Fire Department saved the life of a 64-year-old woman April 8, at the air station’s bachelor officer quarters.

Bill Burich, paramedic, Miramar Fire Department, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, received a call from the dispatch center about a woman complaining of chest pains and feelings of nausea.

When Burich arrived with his 5-man fire-fighter emergency medical technician team he immediately treated the patient, who had a current history of blocked coronary arteries. He started with advance cardiac life support medication to stimulate the heart to help it begin beating normally again.

When the medication did not work and the patient went into full cardiac arrest, Burich then began Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation then used an Automatic External Defibrillator.

The patient was “shocked” twice with the AED and “came to” shortly after the treatment.

“It is very rare to see someone make a full recovery after falling into cardiac arrest,” said Burich, who has been a paramedic for eight years.

The woman was transferred to the Trauma Center, Scripps Memorial Hospital, La Jolla, Calif., shortly after she was revived.

There are usually two paramedics in the team that go to calls such as this one. One EMT will stay with the vehicles if they’re run-



Bill Burich, paramedic, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, takes a break from his duties April 13 in front of his fire station’s ambulance at MCAS Miramar. Burich recently saved the life of a 64-year-old woman who fell into cardiac arrest. Photo by Lance Cpl. Taylor Poulin

ning and the other will do what they can to help the patient, said Burich.

All personnel in the Fire Department are civilians, some with military backgrounds.

The department constantly trains for any type of situation so they can act in a quick manner.

“If it weren’t for the training this department does, the woman may have not survived,” said Burich.

Burich became a paramedic because he wanted to enhance his abilities to help people. He attended Southwestern College, Chula Vista, Calif., for nine months where he learned

to be an emergency medical technician.

“It’s the best feeling in the world when you can succeed in helping someone,” said Burich.

“It’s tough when you go on those calls that don’t work out the way you want it to,” said Burich. “But that time you make a difference for that person you’re helping, it’s worth it.”



Two CH-46 Sea Knights with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 774, Marine Aircraft Group 16 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), take off March 3 after fueling up at the hot pits at Al Asad, Iraq. HMM-774 completed its second Iraqi deployment in 19 months. Photo by Lance Cpl. James B. Hoke

HMM-774 finishes second Iraq deployment

Story by Lance Cpl. James B. Hoke

3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

AL ASAD, Iraq – Brushing the grit from their faces and the sand from their eyes, the Marines with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 774 completed their second deployment to Al Asad, Iraq, April 1, and are heading home to Norfolk, Va.

The Marines with HMM-774, Marine Aircraft Group 16 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), have spent the last seven months transporting Marines and cargo, providing assault support and maintaining their aircraft in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“Our mission is to augment with the active duty forces and provide full mission capable Marine helicopter assault support in the time of a national crisis,” said Lt. Col. Leo A. Kilgore, commanding officer, HMM-774.

According to Kilgore, a Yukon, Okla., native, it's the second deployment the squadron has completed in a total span of 19 months.

“There's not any other Marine squadron out there that has deployed 14 of the last 19 months," he said. "Some squadrons have been out here for 10 months. Some have been out here 12 months in the last few years, but none have done 14 months in a 19-month period.”

As most deployed squadrons are filled with active duty Marines, the “Wild Goose” squadron is amassed of Marines from three of the duty categories.

“A lot of these Marines are reservists, which is about 50 percent of the squadron,” said Kilgore, a University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill graduate. “They live in places like Connecticut and Ohio. When we were in the United States, they didn't get to go home every weekend or see their families that often. When you get right down to it, they have gotten to see their families a total of 90 days in the last two years.”

Although the “Wild Goose” squadron hasn't been able to visit their families that often in the past two years, they have kept mission accomplishments to a maximum.

“We haven't dropped a flight,” said Sgt. Maj. Steven M. Golder, sergeant major, HMM-774. “The Marines have met every mission. The planes have always flown above 80 percent mission capable.

“Being from the ground side, it's different seeing how the air side operates,” the native of Baltimore added. “It is very impressive to see these young Marines working the way that they do. They've covered every mission that they had and did everything they were supposed to do.”

As the coming days begin to pass and the Marines with HMM-774 draw closer to home, a few Marines may find themselves glancing back toward the desert.

“This is where the mission is,” said Maj. Paul W. Voss, assistant aircraft maintenance officer, HMM-774. “This is where you want to be as a Marine. This is a reserve unit that has been activated going on two years now. You have a pretty diverse crowd of reservists, active reservists and active duty Marines working together, and they are all seasoned veterans.”

However, most of the Marines with the “Wild Goose” squadron are ready to hang up their uniforms for a short while and get

back to normal life.

“It's more than getting back to their families,” said Golder, who has served 27 years in the Marine Corps and is scheduled to retire soon after returning home. “They want to get back to what they call the real world. They want to enjoy life for awhile.

The constant rotation of 24 hours on and 24 hours off with a day off a month -- they are just ready for a break.”

According to Kilgore, the squadron has made several achievements during the past two deployments, but there is one that stands out above all the rest.

"Not one person has been hurt or killed, and I haven't had to plan for a memorial service,” said Kilgore. “This is proof positive that three different areas in the Marine Corps – the reserves, the active reserve and the active duty – can come together to become one team, one fight.”

MWCS-38 fights Al Asad communications battle

Story by Lance Cpl. James B. Hoke

3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

AL ASAD, Iraq – From fixing wires to maintaining electrical power, the Marines with Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38 provide the base with both, telephone and data communications.

“We plan, operate, install and maintain the tactical communications for the (Avionics Combat Element) and forward operating bases,” said Master Gunnery Sgt. Roberto S. Pinedo, acting sergeant major, MWCS-38, Marine Air Control Group 38 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward). “That includes your telephone, radio and, of course, data services.”

However, MWCS-38 is not in charge of communicating with the aircraft on the flight line.

“One thing we don't do for the wing is airfield communications,” said Pinedo, a Dineuba, Calif., native. “We don't communicate with the pilots or the tower.”

Although the squadron does not participate in the communications with the flight line or the aircraft, they do provide a great deal of maintenance support to the wing.

“Basically, we provide maintenance support to the entire air wing, as well as outside the wing,” said Gunnery Sgt. Louis R. Gonzalez, maintenance chief, MWCS-38. “Our primary mission is to the wing, but we go above and beyond.”

According to 2nd Lt. Michael R. Phillips, wire platoon commander, MWCS-38, the environment of a combat zone does affect how the Marines are able to accomplish their mission.

“The rain has a tremendous effect on the wire,” said Phillips, a Renton, Wash., native. “Some of the wire we have out here also runs over the old Iraqi copper wire. The way the Iraqis had it set up out here wasn't good and creates a lot of static on the phone.

“We do pretty well considering the



Pfc. Garry L. Lowrance, communications technician, Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38, Marine Air Control Group 38 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), fixes a field radio at Al Asad, Iraq. The squadron does not participate in the communications with the flight line or the aircraft but they do provide a great deal of maintenance support to the wing. Photo by Lance Cpl. James B. Hoke

amount of users on this base,” added Phillips, a Central Washington University graduate. “There is a lot of foot and road traffic on this base. We work 24-hour shifts here, but there are always phones to be fixed, wires damaged from rain, and other problems that we deal with.”

Although there are some shortages and problems that are constant nuisances for MWCS-38, they stay ahead in mission progress.

“The wing is able to communicate with all the units it needs to,” said Pinedo. “We are doing our job. It is working, but we are having our problems. We are somewhere where we have to bring out these communications and make them work.

“We have our hiccups,” he added. “It's

not a garrison environment, so things happen due to weather, things moving around and facility conditions. We are doing a good job. We are providing the servers that the commander needs to communicate with his forces and higher up.”

Even with the small problems the squadron has had, the Marines within MWCS-38 are tactful, professional and technically proficient.

“In the (United States), Marines work from (7 a.m.) to (4:30 p.m.),” said Staff Sgt. Bolivar E. Vilchez, wire platoon staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge, MWCS-38. “Here, there are stress-filled environments with 12-hour shifts, which sometimes carry on to 20 hours straight. The hours are there. The stress is there.”

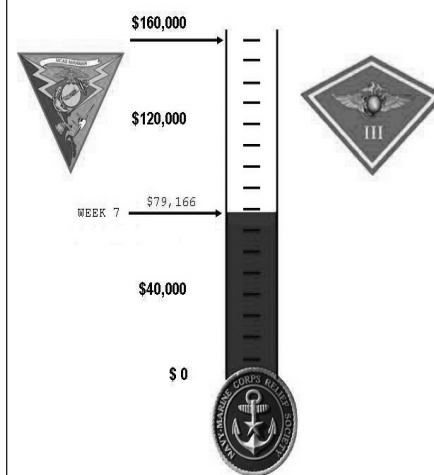
“The Marines in wire platoon know their job though,” the New York City native added. “Dealing with gunnery sergeants and above, professionalism has to be on a high standing.”

According to Pinedo, the air wing wouldn't be able to do their job without communications.

“It just wouldn't be possible,” Pinedo concluded. “It is said that communications is the voice of command and it really is. Without communications, there is no way the commander can get down to his intent without a Marine being an actual messenger who carries it and that is time consuming. We give the commander the ability to communicate quickly so that his actions will be more effective.”

2006 Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Fund Drive

MCAS Miramar/3d MAW Goal:



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www.miramar.usmc.mil

Commandant visits Marines, sailors at Al Asad

Story by Lance Cpl. James B. Hoke

3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

AL ASAD, Iraq – The Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Michael W. Hagee, followed closely by Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps John L. Estrada, visited the Marines at Al Asad, Iraq, April 11.

The commandant began his stay aboard Al Asad by eating breakfast with several Marines from various units at the Wings of Freedom Dining Facility.

“It’s a blessing,” said Lance Cpl. Brian A. Sloan, administration clerk, Marine Attack Squadron 513, Marine Aircraft Group 16 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward). “There are not many times when our great leaders – people with really high authority – come around to see the Marines’ faces. They want to recognize issues and problems the Marines have. They want to know, how the Marines are doing, and even how our families are doing.”

The commandant also stopped at a few squadrons to talk with their Marines, and to address any concerns they had.

“It gave us the capability to express the smaller unit’s biggest problems,” said Capt. Carlton A. Wilson, AV-8B Harrier pilot, VMA-513. “He gave us avenue to talk about new capabilities, as well as to ask for follow on capabilities that will better help us complete our mission.”

“His visit here helps us break up our normal routine,” added Wilson, an Austin, Texas, native. “I’m just glad the Commandant of the Marine Corps and the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps came to visit with the Marines. It was the first time for a lot of the Marines to see a four-star general.”



The Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Michael W. Hagee listens to a Marine's question, during his visit at Al Asad, Iraq, April 11. In the course of the commandant's visit, he ate breakfast with several Marines from various units, as well as stopped by a few squadrons to talk with Marines. Photo by Lance Cpl. James B. Hoke

Corps gives former gang member new direction

Story by Lance Cpl. Brandon L. Roach
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

AL ASAD, Iraq – From Brooklyn to the sandstorms of Iraq, one Marine knows that the choice he made, just a short time ago, may have been the difference between life or death.

Lance Cpl. Mike A. Rivera, current operations clerk, Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, was once involved with a notorious nationwide gang and was headed for a life that people only see in the movies, but with the help of his family and friends, this now motivated Marine is headed for a greater life.

“I got involved with the gang when I was 17,” said the Staten Island, N.Y., native. “I was in it for three years.”

When he first got into the gang, it was supposed to be about unity and religion, but in due time, the corruption of drugs and money transformed it from a religious organization into a ruthless gang.

Rivera hesitated for a moment and recalled in a somber tone, “A good man once said to me, ‘Hey Mike, I understand you want to be a man and that’s fine, but how can you be a man when you have another man tell you what to do?’”

“About a week later, one of the members of our gang had his heart in the right place, but made a wrong decision and paid dearly for it,” said Rivera regretfully. “This man did some things that he did not have permission to do, and we were ordered to hurt him in front of everybody.” The last time I saw him, he was being held over the side of a bridge by one foot. They told us to walk away.

“Right then and there, I knew that if I made a mistake and they didn’t see it was just a mistake, I could be killed,” said Rivera. “This isn’t the lifestyle I wanted to live. I wanted to have kids someday. As a father, would I want to bring my children into this type of environment?”

Around this same time, Rivera was getting involved with a dance group called “Keep Rising to the Top.” His ex-girlfriend was a member of this group and had introduced him to it.

“I have always loved to dance,” boasted Rivera. “Dancing is a large part of my Hispanic heritage and culture.”

After several lessons with the group, Rivera was approached by Violeta Galagarza, his dance choreographer, about some beads that he was wearing. They were a known gang sign and she voiced her concern.

Galagarza told Rivera that unless he got out of the gang, he would have to stop dancing for them. This, along with his girlfriend’s parents saying that he couldn’t date their daughter if he was with the gang, finally gave him the direction he needed.

“I loved her and I loved to dance, so I had to make a choice,” he said. “But I knew getting out wasn’t going to be easy. I was stuck, because I knew if I tried it, it could result in death.”

When the gang heard the news of Rivera trying to get out, they began looking for him at school and around the neighborhoods.

“They didn’t come near my home,” he said. “They had a rival with another gang there, but the fact that they knew where I lived scared me.”

Galagarza’s fiancé at the time knew that he could help. He was a former member of the same gang and was still in contact with



Lance Cpl. Mike A. Rivera, current operations clerk, Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), takes a break from his daily duties at Al Asad. Rivera, a Staten Island, N.Y., native, was once involved with a notorious nationwide gang and was headed for a life that people only see in the movies, but with the help of his family and friends, this now motivated Marine is headed for a greater life. Photo by Lance Cpl. Brandon L. Roach

some of the older members. He and Galagarza went to them for a favor. A successful meeting with the gang members allowed Rivera out of the lifestyle without being harmed.

Rivera’s mother put in for a transfer at her job. He eventually switched schools when they moved out of Brooklyn with his two younger sisters.

Rivera fell behind in his studies after moving to Staten Island and knew, even when he did graduate, he couldn’t afford college.

During a trip to the Intrepid Museum in New York City, Rivera spoke with a Marine about joining the Corps and how it could change his life.

“He sprinkled the magic powder that made me want to join the Corps,” Rivera explained.

This made sense to him considering members of his family have been in every

branch of the military. His grandfather and great-grandfather both served in the Marine Corps, so he followed in their path.

Now stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Rivera is deployed with 3rd MAW to Al Asad.

“He is locked on,” said Lt. Col. Philippe D. Rogers, operations officer, MWHS-3. “He knows his job and is always learning more. He constantly looks for ways to improve himself.”

Rivera is scheduled to be deployed for one year, and when he gets back, he wants to be a drill instructor.

“I give 100 percent at everything I do in the Corps,” said Rivera. “I am a highly motivated person, and I have plans to re-enlist when my first four years are up.”

Although Rivera has only been in the Corps for a short time, he has left a growing impact on the Marines that he works with everyday.

Recently promoted to lance corporal, Rivera has started his climb in the military ranks. He has also been presented with a safety award for his accomplishments as the MWHS-3 safety noncommissioned officer-in-charge.

Without the help of family and friends, Rivera would never have had the chance to excel in the Corps.

“The majority of people that get involved in gangs don’t have the support at home that I had,” said Rivera. “Without the help of everyone, I would be dead or in jail by now.”

“I expect Rivera to be very successful no matter what career he chooses. The Marine Corps has given him the opportunity to escape the past as well as giving him the tools to become a leader and succeed wherever he goes,” said Rogers. “I came in the Marine Corps to lead Marines like Rivera. He is the perfect example of what the Corps is and what leading Marines is all about.”

www.miramar.usmc.mil



Is this your Mustang?

The above vehicle has been marked for impound by the Provost Marshal's Office. To avoid having the vehicle towed, please store it in the Marine Corps Community Services or Traffic Management Office lots. Abandoned vehicles at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar present security risks as well as enviromental and safety concerns. PMO attempts to identify and contact vehicle owners of illegally parked, abandoned vehicles prior to tagging the vehicle with a Department of Defense notice. Vehicles are then scheduled for towing three days following the notice. For more information, call 577-1276/4139.

The following vehicles have been impounded and need to be claimed by the owners. Towing fees average \$113, storage fees \$28 daily. For more information call 577-1461.

Vehicle:	License:
1969 Ford Mustang	CA#4WHX650
1990 Chevy S-10	CA#7R20297
1996 Shoreliner Trailer	CA#4DL4081
UNK.Honda 400EX	CA#168K62
UNK.BMW 328I	CA#5NRT357
UNK.Honda Civic	MA#62FR50

Miramar Movies

The Bob Hope Theater is located in Building 2242, and will be featuring the following movies. Outside food and drinks are not permitted. For more information, call 577-4143 or log on to www.mccsmiramar.com.

Friday:
6:30 p.m. Aquamarine (PG)
9:00 p.m. 16 Blocks (PG-13)

Saturday:
6:30 p.m. Madea's Family Reunion (PG-13)
9:00 p.m. Ultraviolet (PG)

Sunday:
1:00 p.m. *Eight Below (PG)
6:30 p.m. *Date Movie (PG-13)

Wednesday:
6:30 p.m. The Hills Have Eyes (R)

Thursday:
1:30 p.m. Dr. Wilderness Science Magic Show - LIVE Month of the Military Child (FREE)
2:00 p.m. Hoodwinked (PG) (FREE)
6:30 p.m. 16 Blocks (PG-13)

* Indicates the last showing for that film.

Mom or Dad Deployed?

The Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Youth and Teen Center is hosting a gathering for children of deployed Marines and sailors every second and forth Monday of each month.

Children ages 8 to 10 meet from 3:30 to 4:15 p.m., ages 11 to 13 meet from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. For more information, call 577-1322.

Religious Services

The Chaplain's Office is located in Building 5632 and coordinates regularly-scheduled worship services. For the location and meeting schedules of religious activities, contact the Chaplain's Office at 577-1333.

Sunday:
9:30 a.m. Protestant worship service
11 a.m. Roman Catholic Eucharist

Wednesday:
7 p.m. Baptist service

Monday-Friday:
11:30 a.m. Roman Catholic daily mass

Jewish:
7 p.m. First Friday of the month MCRD
7:30 p.m. Last Friday at Edson Range Chapel

Thrift Shop Web Site

Miramar's Navy Marine Corps Relief Society Thrift Shop has a new Web site.

The site contains information about what services the non-profit organization can provide for service members and their families. For more information, visit the Web site at www.mccsmiramar.com. The thrift shop is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

SMP Dodgeball Tournament

The Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Single Marine Program will take part in the West Coast SMP Dodgeball Tournament April 29 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

Gather your team or come alone for an opportunity to face teams from Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, MCAS Yuma and Camp Pendleton. For more information call 577-6283.

Bike-to-Work Day

The San Diego Association of Governments and the California Bicycle Coalition is sponsoring Bike-To-Work Day May 19 as part of the 12th annual California Bike Commute Week.

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar will host one of the many "Pit Stops" that are spread throughout the San Diego region. For more information call 577-1623.